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Identical letters dated 16 July 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On 14 July 2014, Egypt put forward a proposal for a ceasefire to end hostilities between Hamas terrorists in Gaza and Israel. Israel saw the ceasefire as an opportunity for civilians on both sides to return to normal life. The Government of Israel, headed by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, courageously chose the responsible course of action and agreed to do its part to restore the calm.

For six hours, Israel halted all its military activity in Gaza. However, Hamas rejected the ceasefire both in word and deed by firing 47 rockets towards the towns and cities of Israel. In the face of the continued threat to its citizens, Israel had no choice but to defend itself. The formula is simple — when it will be quiet in Israel, it will be quiet in Gaza.

The Government of Israel and the Israel Defense Forces are fully committed to the rule of law and are doing everything in their power to protect civilians. Israel is taking measures that go beyond the requirements of the laws of armed conflict, including by providing advance warning of attacks to the civilian population by means of leaflets, telephone calls and text messages.

In contrast, Hamas has committed an untold number of war crimes by placing civilians on both sides in harm's way. This is a flagrant violation of the most basic laws of armed conflict. For years, Hamas has deliberately targeted Israel's entire civilian population with suicide, rocket and mortar attacks. At the same time, Hamas deliberately and systematically employs tactics that put the Palestinian civilian population in grave danger. It is using Palestinian civilians as human shields by launching attacks from densely populated civilian areas; establishing weapons storage sites and command centres in hospitals, private homes, schools and mosques; and using these locations for terrorist activities.

At this critical juncture, Israel calls on the international community to stop the attacks on Israeli citizens by unequivocally condemning Hamas and supporting Israel's right to defend its citizens.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter distributed as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ron **Prosor**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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